to pay back Provident Fund money due to the workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Extension of ESI medical benefits to more industries

2476. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that workers in the sugar industry, plantations and the building and construction industry are yet to receive the benefits of the ESI medical benefit scheme; and

(b) if so, what are the details of steps Government propose to take to ensure that the workers in these industries receive the benefits of the ESI medical scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) The question of extension of the ESI Scheme to the sugar industry, building and construction industry and plantation has already been examined. However, the same has not been found feasible due to administrative and other constraints.

Violation of minimum wages by State Governments

2477. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that State Governments are violating the Minimum Wages Act in implementing the Jawahar Rozgar Yojna by paying unskilled female workers Rs. 11.51; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to end this violation of the law by State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) An instance of violation of Minimum Wages Act, 1948/Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 in respect of works under Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) came to the notice of the Government. The matter was taken up with the concerned State Government and further releases under JRY were made to the State only after corrective measures were taken by the State Government.

(b) Under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) the wages paid to the workers of a category of employment are required to be the same as notified for the scheduled employment under the Minimum Wages, 1948. Equal remuneration for equal work has to be paid both to the men and women workers employed under JRY as per the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. The Central Government may withheld the grant to the State/Union Territory under JRY, in case the implementing agency do not pay the wages for a category of employment at a rate notified for the relevant scheduled employment under the Minimum Wages, Act. Besides, the appropriate Government under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 also take necessary action whenever any violation of the provision of the Acts comes to their notice.

Child Labour in the country

2478. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are 80 million children working as bonded labour in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government have examined press reports appearing in this regard;

(c) whether these bonded labourers are in the fields of agriculture, mining, and carpet weaving; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to eliminate this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 while abolishing the system of bonded labour also provides for identification and release of bonded labour including child bonded labour. The State Govts. are the competent authorities for enforcement of the provisions of this Act. Financial assistance on a matching basis is made available to the State Govts. for rehabilitation of the BL including Bonded Child Labour who may be identified and released in different sectors including agriculture, mining and carpet weaving. In addition, all programmes taken up for the prevention, welfare and rehabilitation of